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INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS*

BY JOHN W. BEATTY

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SINCE the Carnegie Institute was founded, in 1896, it has organized and presented twelve international exhibitions of paintings, each of which was composed of about three hundred works. These exhibitions have been broadly representative of the modern art of painting of the world. The countries represented, from year to year, were America, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Spain, South America, Sweden, and Switzerland. The average cost of each exhibition was, in round figures, fifteen thousand dollars, which amount included three thousand dollars awarded as prizes, and the expense incident to assembling the collection and entertaining an international jury of award.

The gathering of paintings in many countries, the presentation of those assembled in London, Paris, Munich, and The Hague, to Advisory Committees for consideration, the return of the works, not accepted, to their owners, the bringing of accepted works safely to this country, and the many details connected with the election and the operations of an international jury of award, impose each year a prodigious amount of labor which together with the financial output represent the debtor side of the international exhibition account.

But to consider the credit side of the account. The first item, and probably the most important, is the influence of international exhibitions upon the art of the countries in which they are held. It is not too much to say, I think, that fourteen years ago American art was not adequately estimated or fairly appreciated by the American public. The impression prevailed, especially among purchasers

of paintings, that the works of European artists were more important, artistically, than those produced by American painters. Probably one reason for this general opinion was the conviction that the foreign painters enjoyed superior educational advantages, those who entertained this impression ignoring the fact that American painters studied abroad as well as at home. Furthermore the dealers, upon whom purchasers were to a great extent dependent for expert opinion, anticipating the preference of their patrons, were prone to extol the assumed superiority of foreign works. The products of our own painters received scant consideration. The foreign work had a decided advantage in the open market. Even the art museums were slow to recognize some of our able painters. Whistler was recognized in France by the purchase of the portrait of his "Mother," for the Luxembourg, and in Scotland by the purchase of his "Carlisle," for the Corporation Gallery, before he was publicly recognized in America. It was not until 1896, when his portrait of "Sarasate" was purchased by the Carnegie Institute, that he was thus recognized here. And only within very recent years has Twachtman, one of the most brilliant modern painters, been fully recognized. Indeed, although Twachtman died thirteen or fourteen years ago, it was not until 1905 that one of his paintings was placed in a public collection, since when the following list of his works have been purchased by art institutions.

"Greenwich Hills," Carnegie Institute, 1905; "Sailing in the Mist," Pennsylvania Academy, 1906; "The Forest" and the "End of Winter," W. T. Evans, for National Collection, 1907; "February," Boston Museum, 1907; "Summer Day," John Herron Art Institute, 1907; "Fishing Boats at Gloucester," W. T. Evans, another work for the National Collection, 1907; The Carnegie Institute exchanged

*A paper read upon the occasion of the dedication of the new building of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, November 9, 1909.

"Greenwich Hills" for "River in Winter," a larger canvas, 1907; "Round the Hill Road," W. T. Evans, 1908; "Waterfall," and "Snow," Worcester Museum, 1908 and 1909; "The Pool," Detroit Museum, 1909; "The Falls," Metropolitan Museum, 1909; and some years ago Frank Duveneck, the painter, presented to the Cincinnati Museum "The Waterfall."

I have referred to Whistler and Twachtman because I am especially familiar with these instances, and with the purpose of demonstrating that Art Museums have not always been as prompt as they should have been to recognize the ability of American painters. As a result of these conditions, comparatively few American paintings or sculptures were offered in the marts of trade, and, therefore, the opportunities of comparison were not at hand. Quite naturally the lack of appreciation was felt by the artists.

To counteract these conditions many influences were doubtless at work, but I believe a potent force in their correction may be traced to the frequently recurring international exhibitions at the Carnegie Institute, wherein, year after year, some hundred and fifty paintings representative of the ablest masters of Europe were mingled with a like number representing the strongest men of America. Many art lovers, from many cities widely separated, came, year after year, to study the exhibitions, and, what was probably more important as affecting the result, eminent and able art editors and correspondents of this country also, who later spread their impressions broadcast, through the monthly, weekly, and daily journals. Never before had so many opportunities, following each other in quick succession, been offered the critical and interested to make comparison of the art of the old and new worlds, and the effect was quickly and broadly felt. Among those who came to see and those who read, a dominant impression prevailed, namely, that the American works were as strong and beautiful as those of any other country. The result was twofold. First, the creating of a profound respect for American art among art lovers, and, second, the inspira-

tion in the minds of the American painters of a wholesome and helpful confidence.

In addition to the public and professional interest thus aroused, there came into existence other and not less potent factors. Each year there was elected, by the votes of some seven hundred contributors, an international jury composed of two foreign and eight American painters. The jurors thus elected met, from year to year, at Pittsburgh, to pass final judgment upon the works assembled, and to bestow the awards. The foreign members elected have been Robert W. Allan, Edmond Aman Jean, Rene Billotte, George Breitner, Emil Claus, Charles Cottet, Alexander Harrison, John Lavery, Albert Neuhuys, J. F. Raffaelli, Alexander Roche, William Stott, John M. Swan, Fritz Thaulow, Edwin Lord Weeks, Anders L. Zorn, and Alfred East. Men of the first rank whose generous and spontaneous expressions of appreciation of American works has strengthened and confirmed the faith of the American exhibitors. Thus, through the medium of the men who have assembled as jurors in the last thirteen years, a just estimate of the strength of the American school of painting found authoritative expression, and this judgment, subsequently, upon the return of the jurors to their homes, found voice in many lands.

It is not claimed that the rapid advancement made in appreciation of American art in the last thirteen years was due solely to the influence of the international exhibitions at Pittsburgh. As I have said before, many influences have been at work. The frequent exhibits of art societies and others of current productions have had great weight. The founding of a National Collection by Mr. Evans at Washington, and the important additions to the Metropolitan Museum Collection by Mr. Hearn, have rendered invaluable service to American art. But I do believe that these international exhibitions, by affording a means of international comparison, have exerted a mighty influence. They have demonstrated to the most obtuse, directly and through many various avenues, that our American art

is equal in quality and spirit to the very best modern art of the world, so that there now exists a greater demand for American works than at any previous time in the history of our country.

Important as this is in a national sense, it is not more significant than the results realized in our own community. Art is universal, and the study of the art of any country affords only a partial view of the subject. Few people of any nation enjoy the advantages of travel. Even art directors, who are, proverbially, much traveled men, sometimes forget this. And there is another consideration. When the average man becomes a traveler, he is, as a rule, many degrees beyond the influence of broad education. Our best work is done among the young people, the students who acquire a knowledge of art readily, because they are free from prejudices, and their minds receptive. It would be interesting to know how many students of the high school classes in any American city have visited Europe. It would be equally interesting to know how many have visited a large city, other than their own, in our own country. I hazard the guess that not one per cent would be found in the first class, and not five per cent in the second class. These young people cannot go to Europe to secure a comprehensive view of art, and the only thing to be done, if they are to secure this view, is to bring European art to them. I think it very probable that the student class, the impressionable, eager, knowledge-seeking young people of Pittsburgh have a broader knowledge of modern art than the young people of any other city in America. They have come to the galleries in tens and in thousands, alone and in care of teachers. For some five years they came under a systematic plan, in which the school authorities co-operated by preparing and circulating schedules, and by detailing teachers to accompany the students. These school groups often numbered as many as three hundred, and included all students of the several high schools, the high school classes of all the schools, and also all the primary and second grade teachers of the entire school system, as well as the

teachers of drawing. In connection with this school work, large framed photographs, representing our entire permanent collection of paintings in the Carnegie Institute, are circulated every year through the public schools. This school work could not be done in the same broad way without the presence, annually, of the international exhibition, nor could the people of Pittsburgh generally receive in any other way the same measure of education and pleasure.

Our international exhibitions, therefore, have exerted a twofold influence: They have helped to bring the American painter into his own, by demonstrating, in a practical way, the equality of his work with the best of the world, and they have afforded our own people exceptional educational advantages.

THE CITIZEN

BILLBOARDS

It is remarkable how great things may be passed thoughtlessly, even by the well-meaning. The Citizen puts himself in this class and yet confesses to having given little heed to the billboard crusade, either pro or con, until very recently.

Two things have been conducive to the broadening of his intellect—a crusader friend and a spacious billboard, newly erected, on a vacant lot directly opposite his library window. Which may have been the more influential is left to conjecture. "Billboards," saith the Crusader, "are a public nuisance, an abomination, a cloak of iniquity, an affliction to the eye, an instrument of evil," and, looking up from a page of charming prose writing to have an irrelevant sign cast in his eyes, the Citizen is inclined to indorse the statement.

The question is, however, what is to be done about it? The Citizen might take an axe and go out some night, in the dark o' the moon, and surreptitiously chop this one down. Ten chances to one he wouldn't be caught, though Madam Citizen declares she would be apprehensive, but the effect would be only temporary—directly it would be replaced, with,